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S E C R E T SOFIA 001681

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STATE FOR R, P, AND EUR/NCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/30/2015

TAGS: PREL PHUM KDEM KPAO KMPI EAID BU

SUBJECT: COMBATING EXTREMISM IN BULGARIA

REF: A. STATE 159129

B. SOFIA 1504

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Beyrle, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S) SUMMARY: Bulgaria's Muslim minority has been a target for recruitment by foreign extremist groups since the early 1990s, and local medi

2. (C) In addition to Islamic extremism, Bulgaria has recently witnessed the rise of a new extremist threat from right-wing nationalists. This

Security Cooperation

10. (S/NF) Bulgaria's National Security Service extensively monitors suspected extremists within the country, with particular attention paid t

Embassy Programs

11. (C) Combating extremism is a mission-wide priority for Embassy Sofia. The Political/Economic section monitors ethnic and religious politic

12. (C) The Regional Security Office works closely with GoB partners to build capacity and bolster the Bulgarian services' capability to resp

13. (U) Significant anti-terror cooperation is also coordinated through the Office of Defense Cooperation. ODC allocates over \$200,000 annuall

14. (U) The Public Affairs Section is active in reaching out to the Muslim minority in Bulgaria:

-In February 2005, PAS sent a female Pomak candidate on a "European Young Muslim Leaders" International Visitor Leadership Program. The candida

-In October 2005, PAS is organizing a two-week workshop that will send six Bulgarian journalists covering ethnic and religious minority issues

-For FY 2006 Post has approved a Single Country International Visitor Project that will provide tools for professional development of civil rig

-Embassy outreach to the Muslim community includes the "Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation". Through this fund, PAS is assisting in th

-PAS arranged for a SEED-funded U.S. speaker on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Sofia University's Department of Middle Eastern and Ori

15. (U) Through the SEED-funded Democracy Commission Small Grants Program, PAS has coordinated several additional programs aimed at improving

- "The Muslim Community in Bulgaria: Facing the Global Challenges" seeks to explore the Muslim community's reaction to world events since Septem

-The "Possible Dialogues on Belief" project, implemented through the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, wil

-Numerous projects focus on improving educational opportunities in Muslim and Roma communities. One Democracy Commission project in the city of

-In advance of Bulgaria's July, 2005 parliamentary elections, Democracy Commission grants promoted political participation and electoral outres

16. (U) USAID works extensively to promote ethnic integration and tolerance through its relationship with Partners Bulgaria Foundation. This p

17. (S) COMMENT: The U.S. Mission in Bulgaria continues to seek out opportunities to combat extremism of all forms. We believe the limited ext
BEYRL